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Dean Logan's Blog

Advice for New Law Professors: Finding Balance

Posted by David Logan on 12/09/2010 at 12:00 AM



Roger Williams Law has built a faculty that is nationally recognized for [placing articles in top law reviews](#) and that is sought out by the national media for their [expertise on the issues of the day](#). But just as important, we have assembled a group of lawyers who excel in the classroom, and there is none more talented, and committed to her students, than Keeva Terry. Keeva has a stellar academic record (BA Harvard, MBA Michigan, JD Columbia) plus practice experience at a top-shelf Wall Street firm (Skadden), but it is her excellence as a teacher that has won her acclaim from our students: Keeva was named "Teacher of the Year" in 2008.

Keeva is now developing a national reputation as well, as evidenced by being asked, along with Kara Drinan from Catholic University Law School, to address a gathering of new law professors at an event sponsored by the Women in Legal Education Section of the Association of American Law Schools. Below are Keeva's remarks.

“*Good Morning. Welcome to the Academy. I am pleased to see so many new law professors and new members of the Section on Women in Legal Education.*

Dean Dark, thank you for this invitation and opportunity to share my thoughts.

“In many ways, this conference marks the beginning of an awesome opportunity that brings with it awesome responsibility. We have the power to shape the next generation of legal scholars and legal practitioners. Our words and our actions can and will influence the future of the legal profession. With that said, there are a few words of advice that I would like to offer as you begin this wonderful journey.”

“First, balance is the key. There are generally three considerations for tenure – scholarship, teaching, and service. Many law schools prioritize them in that order. The challenge is to find the balance among the three.”

“As a new law professor, you might be tempted to focus exclusively on your teaching, but try to guard against that. It is never too early to focus on your scholarly agenda, and I recommend you make your scholarship a priority as early as this summer.”

“If possible, try to develop a stable teaching load of 3-5 courses until tenure. New course preparations can be very time consuming, and they can take away from time to work on your scholarship, which becomes more important as your tenure decision approaches.”

“Be careful not to become over extended with service commitments. If your law school has relatively few tenured or tenure track female law professors, you might be asked to serve on a variety of committees or in various roles. You must

balance being a team player, which is important, with making sure you are not over extended with service commitments. Do Not Feel Compelled to Say Yes to Everything!

“ Finally, be true to yourself. I’m sure you have already heard this, but it is worth repeating. As women, we sometimes feel obliged to be all things to all people. Resist the urge to conform to someone else’s image of you or perception of how you should be. It requires a lot of energy to be someone else but it is effortless to be yourself. Write about topics that interest you. Teach in a manner that feels right to you. Engage in service that is meaningful to you. Embrace the individual who you are!

*”
Again, Welcome to the Academy.*